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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Memorandum

37

20 July 1962

SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR U. ALEXIS JOHNSON

From: Brig. Gen. Lansdale *SA*

A Department of State presentation to the Special Group yesterday included a misstatement of my views in the preparation of a State telegram to U.S. Embassies in Latin America, based on reports of plans by Cuban patriots to attack Castro by bombing key installations in Havana from a third country.

Since this was given to the Special Group members without any opportunity for me to know about or correct the statement, I am noting the truth in this memorandum and am sending copies to other members of the Group in the interest of accuracy. I trust this will straighten the record, so we can proceed in working together for the President's goal without misunderstanding.

The first time that I saw either the draft State telegram or the internal State memorandum of my remarks was yesterday evening, after these two papers had been given to the Special Group. I did not make the statements attributed to me.

At noon last Saturday, 14 July, your representative Robert Hurwitch telephoned Lt-Col James Patchell of my staff. Mr. Hurwitch said that State had drafted a message and that Ed Martin wished it "passed by" me, although the action was being handled by others than Hurwitch. Mr. Hurwitch then "double talked" a version over the telephone.

Lt-Col Patchell informed me of this, obtained my comment, and then reported my comment promptly to Mr. Hurwitch. I did not agree with the proposed message, as related in "double talk" for the following reasons:

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- a. The intelligence estimate seemed premature at that time.
- b. It was "digging pretty deep" to use "increased Soviet aid to Raul Castro" as an argument by U.S. officials with foreign governments.
- c. It seemed heavy-handed for the United States to "direct" Latin American countries to take the actions proposed in the message as given to me.
- d. We want to guide and direct the actions of exile groups, but not "cut them off at the ankles" as proposed in the message. We can't have our cake and eat it, and our premise for winning the project goal rests heavily upon genuine and effective Cuban refugee activity.

Additionally, Lt-Col Patchell informed Mr. Hurwitch that I would like to have an exact copy of the message, if State was sending it out and wanted my reaction. Later, on 16, 17, 18, and 19 July, Mr. Hurwitch was asked for a copy of the proposed message, but each time he replied that he did not have a copy and did not know its status, except that it had not been sent.

The first firm, detailed information I had on this wildcat Cuban operation was given to me by CIA around noon yesterday. I made certain that the State and Defense representatives were promptly alerted, including calling their attention particularly to one detailed CIA report which had just been issued. Also, I was told that Mr. McCone intended to bring this to the attention of the Special Group that same afternoon.

I regret that time has had to be taken on this matter, which could have been straightened out in a few moments if your staff had cut me in properly.

Copies to:

1. General Taylor
2. Mr. Gilpatric
3. Mr. McCone
4. Mr. Kennedy
5. General Lemnitzer

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